



Substantial Progress Made in Industrial Cleanups; Additional Contamination Found in Brook & Floodplain Fields Brook Superfund Site

Ashtabula, Ohio

November 2000

This fact sheet will tell you about:

- Cleanup work completed this year
- Upcoming cleanup activities
- Where you can get more information

Public Meeting

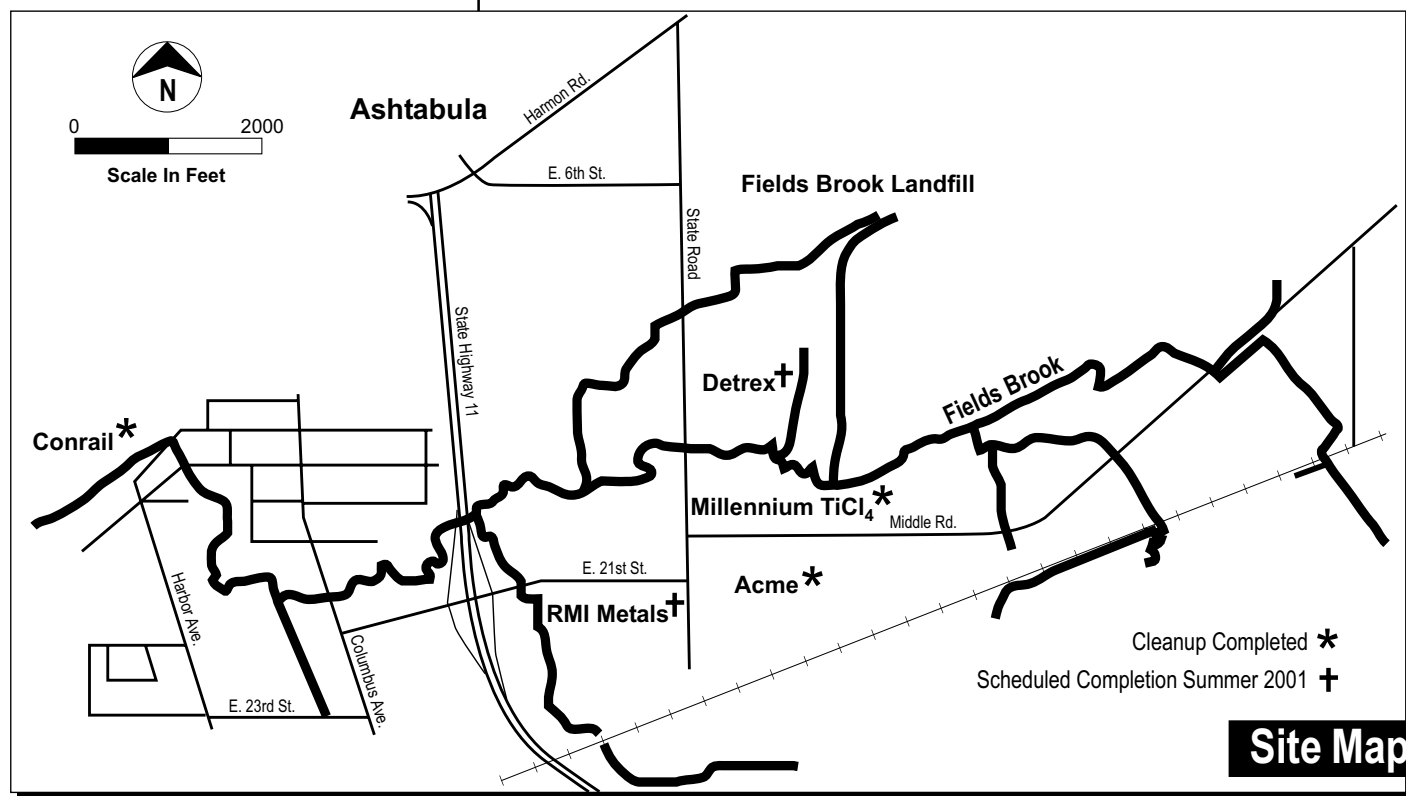
The U.S. EPA will hold a public meeting to give you an update on activities at the Fields Brook Superfund site. The meeting will be held on Monday, December 11, 2000, at 7 p.m. at the Ashtabula Area Chamber of Commerce, Culver Conference Center, 4536 Main Ave., Ashtabula, Ohio.

Introduction

This fact sheet provides information about the Fields Brook Superfund site in Ashtabula, Ohio. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are overseeing cleanup work at the site that will continue this winter and be completed next summer. The U.S. EPA has scheduled a public meeting on December 11, 2000, to inform you of the cleanup progress and the latest developments at the site (see details at left). If you have any questions about this update or the site in general, please contact the U.S. EPA or Ohio EPA staff listed on the back page.

Site History

The U.S. EPA placed the Fields Brook site on the National Priorities List in 1983. Due to the size of the site, the U.S. EPA divided it into separate work areas called Operable Units. These work areas include the cleanup of contaminated sediment in Fields Brook and its tributaries.



ies, the cleanup of contaminated soil in floodplain and wetland areas adjacent to Fields Brook, and the cleanup of the industrial "Source Control" areas that could recontaminate Fields Brook. (See site map on page 1 for names and locations of these areas.) A Record of Decision (ROD), the document outlining the U.S. EPA's cleanup plan, was signed for the Sediment Operable Unit in 1986 and for the Floodplain/Wetland Area and the Source Control Operable Units in 1997. In 1997 and 1999, additional documents that describe changes to the RODs were approved.

Work Completed This Year

Significant progress was made this year on the cleanup of the Fields Brook Superfund Site. A landfill was constructed on what was the RMI Sodium Property on State Road. Excavation began on the Floodplain and Sediment Operable Units of Fields Brook and 16,000 cubic yards of material were removed from the brook and adjacent floodplain and placed in the landfill. In addition, below is a summary of the work that has been completed this year or is currently underway in the industrial Source Control areas.

- **North Sewers Cleanup Completed**

The old sewers were closed and filled with grout and cement to hold any contaminated sediment in the pipes and to prevent any future use of the sewers. Replacement sewers were constructed.

- **Acme Scrap Iron and Metal/South Sewers Cleanup Completed**

Polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB)-contaminated soil was excavated at Acme Scrap Iron and Metal. In addition, storm sewers were cleaned to remove any accumulated contamination that could pose a threat to Fields Brook.

- **Detrex Corporation Cleanup in Progress**

A slurry wall and a system of interceptor trenches are currently being installed to prevent highly contaminated ground water from leaving the site. This work should be completed by the end of the year. In Spring 2001, extraction

wells will be installed to pump out the highly contaminated ground water from below the site.

- **RMI Metals Design Plans Completed**

The design plans for the removal of PCB-contaminated soil have been completed. However, the work has been postponed until Spring 2001 due to concerns about being able to complete the entire project before winter. By delaying the work until next spring, there will be sufficient time to address any problems encountered and to expand the area of excavation (deeper and/or wider), if necessary. The area to be excavated has already been identified, but soil sampling after excavation is required to ensure the removal of all areas with PCB contamination above the cleanup level.

Additional Contamination Found in Brook and Floodplain

More contaminated soil than expected

During excavation, workers discovered additional areas of soil contamination in the brook and floodplain using standard field screening techniques. This additional material contains elevated levels of radionuclides. (Radionuclides is a general term for all radioactive material.) The companies performing the cleanup have promptly addressed the additional volume of contaminated soil. The volume of material removed was nearly twice the amount anticipated.

Additional layer of contaminated liquid found below brook

In addition to removing the larger than expected volume of contaminated material, workers recently discovered additional contamination in the industrial area of the brook adjacent to the Detrex Corporation. A layer of highly contaminated liquid has been found below the surface soils in the brook and floodplain (see Figure 1 on the next page). This form of contamination is referred to as Dense Non-Aqueous Phase Liquid (DNAPL).

This layer contains high levels of solvents and sits, like a large puddle, under the brook and floodplain area between the two companies. Just as oil and water in a glass separate, this layer of contamination is present as a separate phase that sinks below the water in the brook down to the top of the clay layer, which is naturally present in the area.

Trenches were dug in Fields Brook sediment, along the floodplain, and on the Detrex property to determine whether a physical connection exists between what has been found under the brook and the similar DNAPL contamination under the Detrex facility (see previous section for discussion of Detrex cleanup). No physical connection was observed. The source of the contamination appears to be the old Detrex outfall, which is where the company used to discharge wastewater to the brook.

Excavation work on the remainder of the brook and floodplain has been suspended until the layer of DNAPL-contaminated soil can be addressed. Plans to excavate this layer of heavy contamination from under the brook and floodplain are currently being developed. In order to dig out this layer of contamination, workers will go back to areas where work had previously been completed

so that they can dig deeper.

Because the levels of chemicals in this layer are so high, the work must be performed with great care to ensure the safety of workers. Workers should not breathe the vapors from this material and will use either air-purifying respirators, which use filter cartridges to remove contaminants from the air, or tanks of breathing air, similar to those used by fire fighters and divers. This work will pose no health threat to area residents.

Schedule

Plans to address the layer of DNAPL-contaminated soils and a schedule for completion of the remaining work are currently being developed. This information will be provided to the community once it is available. Although the additional volume of radionuclide-contaminated soil and the discovery of the DNAPL problem under the brook has slowed progress, the brook cleanup should still be completed next summer. While it is important to complete the cleanup in a timely manner, the U.S. EPA's first priority is to make sure that the cleanup is thorough and addresses all unforeseen contamination issues.

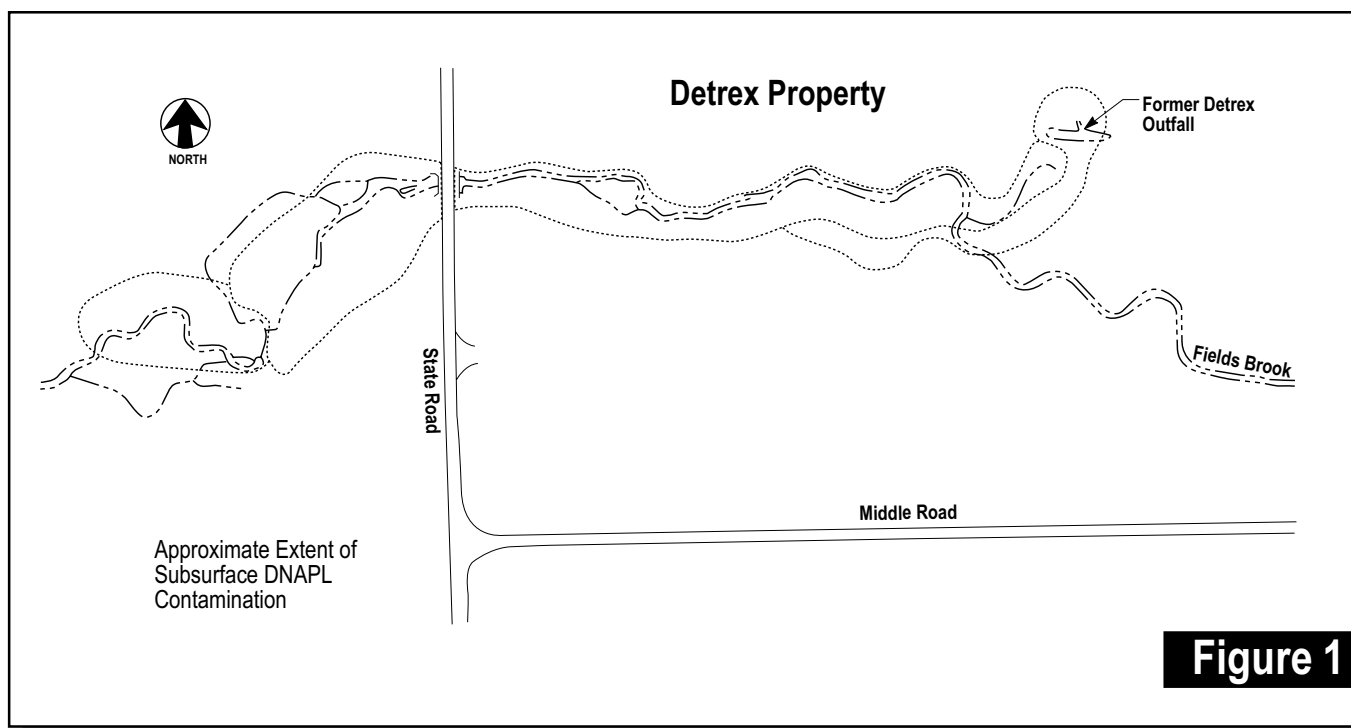


Figure 1

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Anyone interested in learning more about the Fields Brook site cleanup, or the Superfund process in general, is encouraged to review documents in the information repositories located at:

Ashtabula County District Library Kent State Campus Library

335 West 44th Street
Ashtabula, Ohio

3325 West 13th Street
Ashtabula, Ohio

For additional information about the Fields Brook site, please contact:

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Fields Brook Superfund Site Update

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